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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower  
Developments in Indochina*

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
22 February 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

**RECENT COMMUNIST LOGISTICAL AND MANPOWER  
DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA**

SUMMARY

1. Heavy Communist supply activity continued throughout Indochina during the period, and the first new personnel infiltration groups were detected moving south since the cease-fire.
2. Supply deliveries through North Vietnam continue to move toward both northern Laos and South Vietnam and include ordnance as well as food and other types of cargo. The surge of supplies previously detected in North Vietnam has now reached the Laotian Panhandle, where supply activity is peaking. In Cambodia, new roadbuilding has strengthened the Communists' supply system, and detected vehicle activity is proceeding at a very high pace as supplies move between southern Laos and the more southern regions of South Vietnam. Within South Vietnam, Communist elements are expediting resupply to alleviate shortages in some areas and to support combat operations. The Communists plan to continue delivery of supplies from Cambodia and to encourage population resettlement in areas under their control.

3. On the manpower side, Hanoi apparently has renewed limited infiltration of personnel to the south for the first time since the cease-fire. Although no new regular infiltration groups (either of infantry units or replacements) have been detected, 15 special-purpose groups — totaling more than 800 specially skilled military and civilian personnel — are scheduled to enter the infiltration pipeline in the next several days. Regular infantry troops trained in the recent induction class in North Vietnam will be available for disposition in North Vietnam or for infiltration to the south in a month or two.

Note: This memorandum, prepared by the Office of Economic Research.  
Comments and queries are welcome. They may be directed to [redacted]

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4. Although there have been no major redeployments of Communist combat troops into or out of South Vietnam since the cease-fire, a North Vietnamese administrative services regiment -- the 239th -- has deployed from northern Laos and is currently transiting the Panhandle headed for South Vietnam. Other noteworthy redeployments have included the movement of elements of the South Vietnam Liberation Army and the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), previously located in Cambodia, back to their former base area in Tay Ninh Province. Logistical elements in eastern Cambodia may also have moved closer to the South Vietnamese border.

5. The large movement of armor and artillery units toward South Vietnam is discussed in the Appendix. This movement was started before the cease-fire. It has been on a scale at least equal to the initial buildup of armor and artillery forces for the offensive in the spring of 1972. More important, these forces are deploying farther south than ever previously observed.

## DISCUSSION

### Recent Communist Logistical Developments in Indochina

#### *Logistic Activity in Southern North Vietnam*

6. Detections of logistic activity in southern North Vietnam continue to show a mixed picture: heavy resupply activity appears to be continuing there but at a pace slower than in the pre-cease-fire period, when logistic activity was particularly heavy. Significant cargo detections at Binh Tram 18 in the Vinh area included a 14 February report of the shipment of more than 300 tons of supplies (nearly 250 tons were listed as ordnance) through its area. A small part of the ordnance delivered was specifically earmarked for South Vietnam, but most was to go to northern Laos. The destination of several other significant supply movements around Vinh was not available, but it is likely that some of this cargo was also en route to southern Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam.

7. Meanwhile, large quantities of supplies -- believed to be mostly ordnance -- are still moving to northern Laos. On 14 February, Binh Tram 18 reported that it had delivered about 240 tons of cargo -- mostly ordnance -- to northern Laos. An intercept the next day revealed that an associate of Binh Tram 18 was using 20 vehicles a day to transport cargo to Binh Tram 11, which operates along Route 7 in northern Laos. In addition, on 9 and 10 February, railroad cars arrived in Thanh Hoa Province carrying cargo destined for Route 65. To date, roughly 2,000 tons of cargo



have been detected in COMINT moving to northern Laos since 1 February as part of the plan for the first three weeks of February to move 6,600 tons. Additional large quantities of supplies have probably also moved undetected.

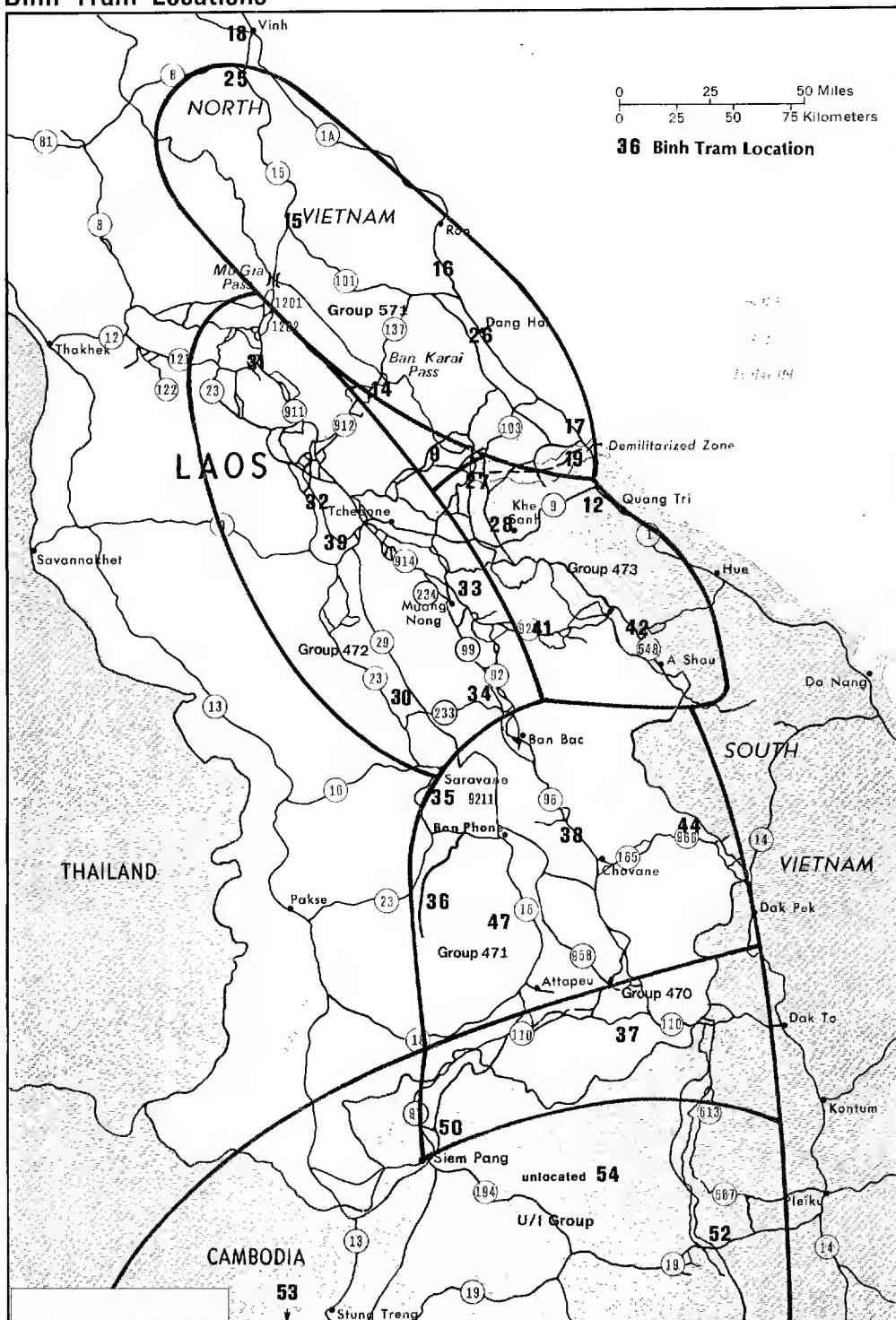
8. Despite the evidence that substantial amounts of cargo are being moved through the Vinh area, vehicle checkpoint reports from Binh Tram 18 are reflecting low levels of activity. Recently available reports covering vehicles moving during the period 5-8 February north of Vinh indicated 37 vehicles traveling south and 38 moving north. This is an insignificant number of vehicles compared with levels observed before the cease-fire, when several hundred vehicles were noted moving daily. The observed decrease, however, may be more apparent than real and may be related to the establishment of through rail connections into the Vinh area in late January.

9. Farther south in the Panhandle, COMINT indicates that North Vietnam's coastal radar stations continue to reflect the movement of supply vessels to coastal anchorages. On 12 February the Directorate of Coastal Shipping at Haiphong was noted communicating with the cargo ship **Ben Thuy** and attempting to reach four other vessels probably involved in this coastal traffic. The following day, two North Vietnamese "supply vessels" were noted operating along the coast just north of the DMZ. Finally, since late January, four additional Chinese ships have entered North Vietnamese waters and may be operating along the southern Panhandle.

#### *Logistic Activity in Laos and Cambodia*

10. Extensive Communist vehicle activity continues in the Laotian Panhandle and northeastern Cambodia as the surge of supplies observed before the cease-fire has moved deeper into the system. Reports from logistic elements in the central Laotian Panhandle have shown the movement of vehicles carrying ordnance, food, and petroleum to the south, as well as eastward toward South Vietnam. On 12 February, for example, an element of Binh Tram 27 near the western end of the DMZ revealed that beginning that day there would be "large vehicle formations to pick up cargo" at an unlocated storage area and transport it to South Vietnam, just south of the DMZ. The following day a directive from Military Region 559 ordered five transportation battalions to pick up cargo in the Binh Tram 32 area near Tchepone and take it to Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam. Four other battalions were ordered to pick up cargo and move it to "B-2", probably southern South Vietnam. Binh Tram 34 in the Ban Bac area was to play a role in this activity, probably guiding the vehicle groups through its area. Numerous supplies were also detected en route through the central Panhandle to the B-3 Front.

## Binh Tram Locations



11. [redacted] truck traffic in the North Vietnam/Laos border area remained at a high level during the period. The Ban Karai Pass area continues to reflect the heaviest traffic, while both Mu Gia Pass and the western DMZ roads are sustaining steady but lower levels of traffic.

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12. Large stores of supplies are remaining at some storage facilities in southern Laos. On 13 February an element of Binh Tram 34 revealed that it had nearly 225 tons of cargo on hand -- a significant portion of which was ordnance, both small arms and heavy weapons. Still, logistic units there have complained of a need for more supplies. On 15 February an element of Group 472 reported that it was having difficulties with its food supplies and that "we need more supplies in order to carry out our mission." Some significant portion of the continuing resupply activity remains directed toward tactical and support units in southern Laos. An intercept of 11 February from Binh Tram 34, for example, revealed that 50 vehicles were being used for the distribution of supplies within the Panhandle, and on the 16th more than 65 tons of rice were noted being delivered to the battlefields in southern Laos.

13. Air strikes are hindering Communist logistic activity in the Panhandle to some extent, and the North Vietnamese have devoted much attention to avoiding air attacks. On 15 January an element of Group 472 complained that whenever its vehicles went out "enemy planes appear." That the North Vietnamese operate quickly when they get a respite from the aerial bombardment was reflected on 16 January when an element of Group 472 revealed that, because there was then little "enemy" air activity, it would have to hurry to move all the "merchandise" according to schedule.

14. North Vietnamese communications during the past week reflected continuing efforts to maintain roads through the central Panhandle, and aerial reconnaissance shows the route structure to be in generally good condition. Further indications of the important role that Route 99 continues to play following the cease-fire in Laos were reflected on 13 February when elements of an antiaircraft regiment were ordered to have repairs on Route 99 completed by 28 February. Vehicle command stations and road signs also are being established along Route 99. A few personnel are to man each station and are to be neatly dressed, to wear red armbands, and to be equipped with flags and whistles. These preparations could relate to the emplacement of control teams along Route 99 after the cease-fire in Laos.

15. Detected activity on the feeder routes into South Vietnam has been sporadic but reveals continuing movement -- sometimes substantial -- across the border.

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[redacted] photography has shown evidence of heavy vehicle activity on Route 922. Farther south, in the tri-border area, COMINT continues to reveal sustained, heavy vehicle activity toward both the B-3 Front and Cambodia. Some of the activity is associated with the movement of personnel groups through the area, but we believe that large quantities of supplies also continue to move into these areas. An indication of the heavy vehicle activity is shown by a wrapup which reveals that more than 530 vehicles moved toward COSVN and the B-3 Front between 1 and 10 February. An additional 700 vehicles were noted moving, but to unknown destinations.

16. Recent intelligence reveals that the Communists have expanded their logistic corridors through eastern Cambodia. Photography [redacted]

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[redacted] revealed several new roads between major enemy base areas built in recent months through remote, densely tree-covered areas. The new roads apparently were built since late November 1972 and encompass some 70 miles of new construction from Route 19 south and southwest toward Route 13 near Kratie. Although the roads are largely hidden beneath the tree canopy, the visible sections show extensive use by four-wheeled trucks. The roads appear to be a further southward extension of the Route 97/975 road system constructed over the past two years between the Laotian border and Route 19 near Stung Treng.

#### *Logistic Developments in South Vietnam*

17. The Communists are continuing widespread logistics-related operations in South Vietnam, including the preparations by an element of the NVA 324B Division of underground facilities in Thua Thien Province in MR 1, for its "long-term" stay there. Elsewhere in northern South Vietnam, 22 trucks loaded with food and ammunition from North Vietnam reportedly arrived at a transshipment point in the DMZ in early February.

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[redacted] the supplies were destined for Quang Tri Province, where "a large quantity" of ammunition had already been shipped "in case the cease-fire did not last." Recent aerial photography also reflected continuing Communist vehicle resupply around Khe Sanh:

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[redacted] at least 37 vehicles -- probably cargo trucks -- were noted dispersed in revetments and truck parks near the junction of Routes 9 and 616. More recently, on 19 February an element of Binh Tram 12 operating around Quang Tri reported that 57 trucks had moved some 200 tons of cargo to NVA maneuver elements. In Quang Tin Province in MR 1, heavy Communist truck traffic was reported in early February heading into the



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coastal lowlands, where elements of the NVA 711th Division are resupplying to relieve shortages resulting from sustained tactical operations.

18. In the southern half of the country, the Communists have reinforced security forces along two major infiltration corridors into the Delta to ensure a continuing resupply capability from Cambodian border base areas. Immediately after the cease-fire, a COSVN official reportedly told rear services cadre that supply lines from Cambodia would remain in use to support units in the Delta until the Communist forces there can control enough territory to be self-sufficient. After that time, he implied, only ordnance requirements would be met via this corridor. In MR 3, the 814th Rear Service Group has continued to use the Saigon River Corridor to move supplies southward into Binh Duong Province north of Saigon.

#### *International Resupply to North Vietnam*

19. Large quantities of goods now are being moved to or planned for future delivery to North Vietnam. At Haiphong, limited shipping activity is under way and picking up. Ten merchant ships have departed from Haiphong since the cease-fire, and there are indications that some of the remaining vessels are making preparations to depart. As of 20 February 1973, 16 ships are left at Haiphong and one at Cam Pha.

20. In other developments, the Boris Lavrenev, originally scheduled to unload its cargo of more than 10,000 tons of fertilizer and vehicles at Chan-chiang in southern China, left that port on 16 February and arrived at Haiphong on 18 February, with unloading to have begun on 20 February. As of 20 February, there were two ships with about 22,000 tons of cargo in the waters off Haiphong; two additional ships offloaded 7,500 tons and left on 19 February. Since the cease-fire, a total of nearly 35,000 tons of cargo have arrived in the Haiphong area. In addition, 19,000 tons have been delivered by Chinese ships to North Vietnamese waters, but specific ports are unknown. Total seaborne shipments for North Vietnam via various ports in China and North Vietnam since the cease-fire thus equal nearly 85,000 tons as of 20 February, compared with a monthly average of 76,000 tons in the nine months immediately preceding the cease-fire, as follows:

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	<i>Via China</i>	<i>Via Haiphong</i>	<i>Via Unidentified Ports<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,800</b>	<b>34,800</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>84,600</b>
Food	5,600	18,800		24,400
Petroleum	11,700	3,800		15,500
Fertilizer	3,000	9,500		12,500
Metals	1,100			1,100
Machinery and equipment	200			200
Transportation equipment	200	600		800
Unidentified	7,400	2,000	19,000	28,400
Other	1,600	100		1,700

a. Seven Chinese ships of the Hung Chi class have been active in North Vietnamese waters since the cease-fire and probably have delivered an additional 19,000 tons of cargo to North Vietnam since 27 January.

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***Reconstruction of Lines of Communications  
in North Vietnam***

21. We estimate that the North Vietnamese are continuing to fill in the gaps in their primary rail system,

By this time, repairs to key rail bridges and yards should be well along, and the system's capacity should be steadily increasing. Similarly, the highway system should now be in good repair, with alternate routes available to bypass major interdictions.

22. In related developments, the North Vietnamese are reinstating their bomb-damaged jet-capable airfields. During early February they began to fly into Dong Hoi airfield, making this the first airfield south of 20° to be repaired since the total bombing halt on 15 January.<sup>1</sup> Although Dong Hoi is not yet capable of sustaining MIG operations, it can provide limited use for the shuttling of special personnel or priority cargo to South Vietnam. In this connection, an AN-2 flight from Dong Hoi to an airstrip near Communist-held Khe Sanh in South Vietnam was scheduled on 11 February, although no indication of the purpose of the flight was provided. COMINT on 16 February revealed that North Vietnamese aircraft, including helicopters, would be flying into the Khe Sanh area: subordinates of Binh Tram 26 near Dong Hoi were advised not to shoot down any transiting aircraft. Recently, SA-2 equipment was sighted in the vicinity of this airfield. To date, there have been no confirmed flights to the airfield.

1. North of 20°, repairs to airfields were made after the December bombing halt there.

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## Recent Communist Manpower Developments in Indochina

### *Personnel Infiltration*

23. COMINT of 18 February revealed that 15 special-purpose infiltration groups -- with a total strength of more than 800 personnel -- were to be dispatched from Binh Tram 18 in the Vinh area within the next several days, the first groups to enter the pipeline since the cease-fire took effect. Most of these newly detected groups bore the QL designator -- indicating specially trained military and civilian personnel.<sup>2</sup> Several had referenced strengths considerably higher than the usual special-purpose groups, a possible indication that Hanoi intends to renew at least the special-purpose infiltration flow to the south -- and with higher than normal average group strengths.

24. All previous post-cease-fire detections of regular and special-purpose infiltration groups were observed at points farther south in the infiltration system, implying that they entered the pipeline before 27 January. The detection of five regular groups during the past week -- plus resulting gapfills -- has raised our estimate of infiltration starts this dry season by 6,000 men. As a result, infiltration starts from 1 September to 27 January are now estimated to total 67,000, compared with 76,000 for the same general period during the 1971/72 infiltration cycle. The following tabulation shows the current estimate of infiltration starts since September 1972, by destination, including the 15 new special-purpose groups.

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Strength</i>
Total	68,000
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	19,000
MR 5	7,500
B-3 Front	11,500
COSVN	19,000
Southern Laos/ MR 559	11,000

### *VC/NVA Redeployments in South Vietnam*

25. Since the cease-fire, there have been no major redeployments of Communist combat units into or out of South Vietnam. The order of battle

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2. The functional composition of QL-designated groups has varied considerably in the past. Both collateral and COMINT have indicated that QL groups which have traveled to South Vietnam have comprised military personnel, such as sappers, medical personnel, cinematographers, entertainers, and civilian administrative cadre.

of VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam and the disposition of major Communist and South Vietnamese units are shown in the accompanying table and map. However, one North Vietnamese administrative services regiment - the 239th NVA Engineering Regiment is deploying to South Vietnam. One battalion of this regiment apparently is to be sent to the western highlands of MR 2 and the other two to MRs 3 and 4. The regiment's current location in Attapeu Province makes it a candidate to cross the border into South Vietnam within the next few days and become the first known deployment of a major North Vietnamese unit into South Vietnam since the cease-fire began.

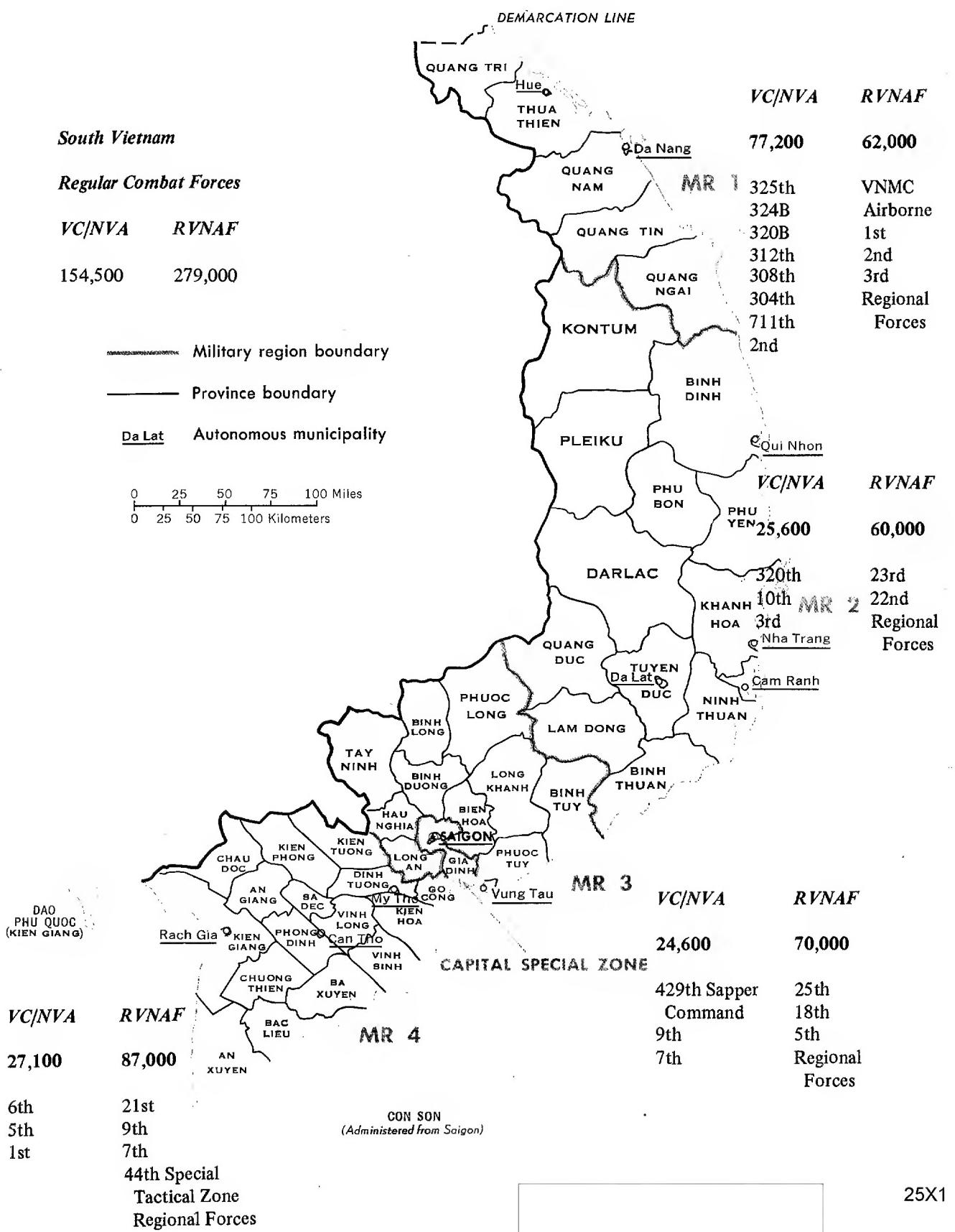
**Order of Battle of Communist Military Forces in South Vietnam**  
**20 February 1973**

	<i>MR1</i>	<i>MR2</i>	<i>MR3</i>	<i>MR4</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Regular combat forces</b>	<b>77,210</b>	<b>25,600</b>	<b>24,600</b>	<b>27,050</b>	<b>154,460</b>
NVA	73,750 <sup>a</sup>	19,330	19,525	15,830	128,435
VC	3,460	6,270	5,075	11,220	26,025
<b>Administrative services</b>	<b>23,700</b>	<b>17,200</b>	<b>16,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>70,900</b>
NVA	18,190	9,300	4,900	1,340	33,730
VC	5,510	7,900	11,600	12,160	37,170
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,910</b>	<b>42,800</b>	<b>41,100</b>	<b>40,550</b>	<b>226,360</b>
NVA	91,940	28,630	24,425	17,170	162,165
VC	8,970	14,170	16,675	23,380	63,195

a. Including 12,050 personnel in antiaircraft artillery units.

26. COMINT of mid-February also revealed that the headquarters of the Communists' South Vietnam Liberation Army (SVNLA), its tactical control authority, and elements of COSVN have relocated from Cambodia, and they appear to have re-established their former base area in northeastern Tay Ninh Province. This is the same general area occupied by SVNLA and COSVN before the Allied cross-border operations in the spring of 1970. The first indication of the eastward shift of Communist command entities was observed in early December when a forward element of the headquarters of SVNLA moved into South Vietnam. The significance of the move, however, was not apparent until 12-14 February when additional major VC/NVA radio terminals of SVNLA -- including the headquarters itself -- were identified by direction-finding as being in South Vietnam. Whether these entities redeployed into South Vietnam before the cease-fire date as

# SOUTH VIETNAM ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



part of the Communists' effort to move major VC/NVA elements back in-country prior to 27 January cannot be determined, but additional elements of SVNLA and COSVN still believed to be in Cambodia may now be in the process of returning to South Vietnam.

27. Within South Vietnam, the Communists have continued to reposition some major combat units during the past week. In northern MR 1, the 24th Regiment of the 304th NVA Infantry Division has been shifted northward from near the Quang Tri-Thua Thien border to an area south of the Cua Viet River and east of Quang Tri City, apparently to bolster defenses in response to South Vietnamese post-cease-fire military operations.

28. In addition, Hanoi augmented its air defense forces in Quang Tri Province by deploying two antiaircraft regiments and major elements of one SAM regiment from North Vietnam into that region in January. The two antiaircraft regiments may rotate with or provide replacements for any of the several antiaircraft units in the province that are in need of refitting following heavy fighting in 1972. Eight of the 12 antiaircraft regiments in the province have been in a deploying status since the week of 20-27 January, although most of the eight probably are just repositioning within Quang Tri Province. The major elements of the SAM regiment have now deployed into the Khe Sanh area. These units, along with two antiaircraft regiments there, provide a formidable air defense posture in the area of Khe Sanh airfield, which apparently is now operational.

29. In southern MR 1, the 572nd NVA Tank/Artillery Group recently relocated from the coastal lowlands of Quang Nam Province to northwestern Quang Tin Province near the 711th NVA Infantry Division to evade military operations of the 3rd ARVN Infantry Division and to provide artillery support to the 711th in its defense against a possible ARVN advance into the division's base area. Elsewhere, elements of the 12th Regiment of the 3rd NVA Infantry Division apparently have moved several miles northward into Quang Ngai Province from its previous area in extreme northern Binh Dinh Province. The move apparently is designed to reinforce elements of the 2nd NVA Infantry Division near the village of Sa Huynh, and it may have been in direct response to the recent South Vietnamese reinforcement of the 2nd ARVN Infantry Division. The division had been ordered to retake Sa Huynh, which it did on 16 February.

30. In MR 4, COMINT reveals that elements of the 1st NVA Infantry Division (including the 52nd Regiment) continue to shift positions along the South Vietnam/Cambodia border. Collateral sources also indicate that elements of another regiment of the division - the 44th - may have moved

across the border from Chau Doc Province into Cambodia. The disposition of these units may indicate that it has been restructured and its area of operations reduced.

*Developments in Laos and Cambodia*

31. No major North Vietnamese combat units have deployed into or out of Laos since the cease-fire in South Vietnam, although there also has been some repositioning of forces within the country. Several major North Vietnamese units in northern Laos have recently abandoned their efforts at Bouam Long and relocated to the Plaine des Jarres area. This movement, coupled with the relocation of several smaller Pathet Lao and Deuane Neutralist units toward the Plaine, provided a strong Communist presence around the Plaine on the eve of the cease-fire agreement in Laos.

32. There have been no major redeployments of combat units in southern Laos during the past two weeks. The North Vietnamese, however, substantially augmented their combat force structure there during the several months prior to the cease-fire in South Vietnam. Four to five new infantry regiments and three antiaircraft artillery regiments were formed in the Panhandle or deployed there from North Vietnam. With these additions to the force structure, the strength of North Vietnamese combat forces in southern Laos currently is estimated at about 20,000 troops -- an increase over the last several months to a level commensurate with that estimated a year ago -- includes eight infantry regiments and eight antiaircraft artillery regiments. The eight antiaircraft regiments in the Panhandle represent one of the largest air defense forces ever noted there at this time of year.

33. In Cambodia, the relocation of major VC/NVA command entities and tactical units into South Vietnam during the past six weeks takes on added significance when related to evidence that the NVA logistic organization in northeastern Cambodia recently has been changed and that some elements appear to be relocating closer to the South Vietnamese border. If these relocations are confirmed, they may be directed related to recent and possibly future moves of VC/NVA command and tactical units back into South Vietnam. In addition, the relocation will strengthen the NVA logistical command and control apparatus in this critical resupply corridor to South Vietnam's MR 3.

*Manpower Developments in North Vietnam*

34. North Vietnam had apparently essentially completed its December-January induction phase before the cease-fire in South Vietnam. Four North Vietnamese newspapers, which previously had given prominent coverage to this conscription phase, have published no articles on the subject

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since 26 January. Although the total volume of intercepted personal messages relating to induction for January is not yet available, preliminary reporting shows it to be lower than in December, an indication that the phase has been terminated since late January, when workers were still being exhorted to enlist. Tenuous evidence indicates that the spring induction phase will be held as usual in March-April, and, in fact, youths are already in physical training, preparing for their pre-induction physical.



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## APPENDIX

### BUILDUP OF NVA ARMOR AND ARTILLERY IN THE SOUTH

Hanoi deployed a very large number of armor and artillery groups to the south during the period between late October 1972 and the start of the cease-fire in South Vietnam. These groups currently are spread throughout the NVA Military Region 559 infiltration system in the Laotian Panhandle as far south as northeastern Cambodia. Many will reach their final destination in South Vietnam and Cambodia within the next several weeks, increasing considerably the firepower capability of Communist forces in these areas.

Available evidence indicates that the number of tanks which Hanoi deployed south during the three-month period probably exceeds the number estimated to have been initially committed to South Vietnam for the spring offensive in 1972. Since October 1972, at least 310 tanks have been detected in COMINT regarding the movement of 19 armor groups in the infiltration system. In addition, at least 50 armored personnel carriers and other armored vehicles have been noted. Five and possibly as many as eight other armor groups have been detected moving southward without referenced tank strengths -- they could add another 80 to 130 tanks to the total number destined for South Vietnam and Cambodia. Besides the tanks in these 24 to 27 armor groups, another 25 tanks were detected in January, prior to the cease-fire, deploying directly across the DMZ into Quang Tri Province. In sum then, 415 and possibly as many as 465 tanks -- largely the Soviet T-54 and Chinese T-63 models with 100-mm and 85-mm guns, respectively -- are estimated to have deployed south between late October 1972 and 27 January 1973.

Last dry season, Hanoi initially deployed an estimated 400 tanks to South Vietnam for the spring offensive and subsequently sent probably another 100 to replace in part the large number of tanks lost in northern MR 1. Of the 500 tanks, approximately 70% were committed to MR 1, 25% to MR 3, and the rest to the Highlands of MR 2. Although the final destination of all of the 415 to 465 tanks sent south this dry season is not yet known, it is clear that -- in marked contrast to last year -- the North Vietnamese are committing the majority to the southern half of South Vietnam and Cambodia.

COMINT indicates that the number of artillery-associated groups -- including both field and antiaircraft artillery units -- which Hanoi deployed south between the start of the 1972/73 dry season and the beginning of

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cease-fire in South Vietnam is among the largest such commitments of the war. Of the 160 regular infiltration groups going to South Vietnam, Cambodia, and southern Laos -- both observed and derived by gap filling -- nearly 40% were artillery-associated groups. In addition, five integral antiaircraft artillery regiments deployed south from North Vietnam in January 1973 prior to the cease-fire -- two to northern MR 1 and three to southern Laos -- and major elements of a North Vietnamese SAM regiment also deployed into northern South Vietnam.

Specific types of artillery weapons, including long-range 122-mm and 130-mm field guns as well as such antiaircraft weapons as the 23-mm, 37-mm, and 85-mm guns, were associated with the southward movement of approximately one-third of the identified artillery groups. Although all these weapons have been used by the Communists in South Vietnam before, both the quantity of weapons deployed in such a short period of time and their destination make the movement significant.

It is apparent that Hanoi has augmented considerably the firepower capability of its out-of-country forces -- especially in the southern three-fourths of South Vietnam -- this dry season. Of the approximately 165 artillery pieces specifically referenced in COMINT, more than 55% were destined for the Central Highlands of South Vietnam and the COSVN area, almost all of which were identified as 122-mm field guns or howitzers and 130-mm field guns. Last year the North Vietnamese use of these weapons against South Vietnam was concentrated almost entirely in MR 1.

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